

Some Fort Leavenworth Trivia

- Fort Leavenworth was established in 1827. In the life of the American republic, that was a long time ago. To put that in perspective: Barack Obama is the 44th president; Fort Leavenworth was established during the administration of John Quincy Adams, the 6th president of the United States.
- Fort Leavenworth is the fourth oldest continuously active Army post after the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York (1778), Fort McNair (formerly Washington Barracks), Washington D.C. (1791), and Fort Monroe, Hampton, Virginia (1819).¹ It will move up to third in 2011 when Fort Monroe closes
- Fort Leavenworth was never a fort in the classical definition (a location designed primarily for defense). Forts of the American frontier were of four types: open, stockade, stone-built, and adobe or brick. Fort Leavenworth was the first—and still the longest serving—open fort on the Plains. Even in its earliest days, Fort Leavenworth looked like a residential settlement around a village green.
- Fort Leavenworth was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1962. This was followed in 1966 with a further designation as a National Historic Landmark District. The Fort Leavenworth National Historic Landmark District includes most of the post north of Merritt and Smith Lakes and encompasses 217 buildings, including the 64 remaining from the 1860-90 period, six archeological sites representing pre-historic Native peoples, three structures, and two objects for a total of 228 historic properties.
- While Fort Leavenworth has buildings dating from 1830s—the Rookery was completed in 1834 and is the oldest continuously occupied building in the state of Kansas, the period most represented is 1890 to 1917. At least 155 buildings were built, most of brick. Most of the structures erected during this boom time still exist.
- Fort Leavenworth has twenty-three buildings remaining from the 19th and early 20th century—the last built in 1910—linked to the 5,000 year old relationship between the military and the horse: three riding halls, two veterinary hospitals, and eighteen stables. All but three are now put to other uses.
- On Fort Leavenworth place-names are descriptive, associative, and commemorative. Descriptive names are those which distinguish a place by noting some permanent or semi-permanent characteristic such as Riverside Avenue, Sylvan Trail, and Single Soldiers Quarters. An associative name relates the place to something else. Corral Creek is not a corral, but it runs through the area once used to corral oxen in the 19th century. A commemorative place-name is intended to conserve a memory or to do an honor such as The Buffalo Soldiers Memorial. There are scores of commemorative place names on post.
- There are four warehouse roads on Fort Leavenworth.
- There are more than 200 people memorialized in various forms on Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. This number includes five women, including an Army nurse who graduated from

¹ Carlisle Barracks, Carlisle, Pennsylvania, is old, but it has not been a continuously active Army post. In 1879 the War Department passed control of the post to the Department of the Interior and for the next 39 years it was home to the Carlisle Indian Industrial School. On 1 September 1918 it reverted back to the War Department. The Army Center of Military History relates that the War Department and later the Department of the Army long ago decided to avoid the “superlatives” business. Present Department of the Army policy is not to adjudicate any Army installation or facility’s claim to be the oldest, largest, longest serving, best, etc.

Leavenworth High School and the local St. John Hospital School of Nursing. There are several African-Americans, including the first black graduate of the U.S. Military Academy, the highest ranking black officer in the Army during World War I, and the first black man to achieve the rank of full general in the Army. Several are noncommissioned officers who earned their renown together with their Medals of Honor. One street was even named for a Sailor. And there are two foreigners memorialized, one a Spanish knight and the other a French marquis.

- Fort Leavenworth has one indoor and two outdoor swimming pools. It has three pools no longer in use: the former officer's club pool at the Frontier Crossroads Center now filled in; the YMCA pool in the basement of the Patch School Age Services building now inactive; and the recreation center pool that now serves as the basement of the east wing of Townsend Hall.
- Fort Leavenworth has memorial stained glass windows in two buildings, the Lewis and Clark Center and the Main Post Chapel. It formerly had stained glass windows in St. Ignatius Chapel before it burned in 2001.
- There is a memorial on Fort Leavenworth so exclusive that only 44 men have been recognized in the last 183 years—and CAC leadership has little to do with the selection process, other than exercising their right to vote. In the Lewis and Clark Center is the Commander in Chief's Hallway with portraits of all the presidents of the United States. It is a reminder to the faculty, staff, students, and college visitors of the principle of civilian control of the military. Article 2, Section II of the Constitution of the United States says, in part, "*The President shall be Commander in Chief of the Army.*"
- There are no memorials on Fort Leavenworth to officers who resigned their commissions in the United States Army to serve the Confederacy. However, three are recognized in the Fort Leavenworth Hall of Fame. Joseph E. Johnston and Robert E. Lee (both USMA 1829) had long and distinguished Army careers before their resignations, James E.B. Stuart (USMA 1854) served for less than seven years before his resignation. He served extensively in Kansas and Missouri.

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- International military students attending CGSC send their children to school on Fort Leavenworth or in Leavenworth. Few school systems in the United States have such a diverse student body with children from many nations enrolling each year. Some foreign students take full advantage of this unique—for them—educational opportunity. A few years ago, the Swiss family had two sons who played American football for Leavenworth High School; certainly an unusual athletic activity for Swiss teenagers.
- Fort Leavenworth buildings have four identification systems. Originally buildings were numbered by importance, hence Quarters #1 is 1 Scott Avenue. Late in the 19th century the post engineer started numbering buildings in groups, e.g. buildings associated with the USDB are generally numbered in the 400s. As the number of streets grew during the building boom of the early 20th century, buildings received street addresses. Finally, some there are more than 100 buildings on post with commemorative names. As a result a visitor may search for the Sutler's House, building #5, 611 Scott Avenue, and the dedicated quarters for the deputy commander for training and be looking for the same location.
- Ten Fort Leavenworth housing areas are named for Native American tribes.

- There are two marble plaques on post commemorating 19th century construction activities. The oldest on the south face of building #473 in the old USDB identifies its construction date as 1863 and its construction supervisor as Major E.A. Easton. The other is on the west face of the Grant Avenue viaduct over Corral Creek. It tells the viewer that the viaduct was built in 1864 by Captain H.C. Hodges.
- The 5-foot tall one-ton bell hanging in the Grant Hall clock tower has a quotation on its side from Major General J. Franklin Bell, the post commander when the bell was installed in 1907. This bell, little known today, is the namesake for the CGSC yearbook.
- Robert E. Lee (brevet colonel and temporary colonel of engineers) visited Fort Leavenworth—probably for one day, 24 September 1855—while the lieutenant colonel of the 2nd Cavalry to serve on a court martial board.
- U.S. Grant is the most memorialized namesake on Fort Leavenworth: Grant Gate, Grant Avenue, Grant pool, Grant statue, Grant Hall, Grant Auditorium, President in the Commander in Chief's Hallway, and the Grant stained glass window in the Lewis and Clark Center.
- Buffalo Soldier Private Fitz Lee is the only person memorialized on post with two buildings: the Lee House on Organ Avenue and Fitz Lee Hall, the post theater, on Grant Avenue.
- Lieutenant Colonel Irene C. Blochberger is the only military women memorialized on Fort Leavenworth. She is the namesake for Blochberger Terrace Apartments and Blochberger Avenue.
- The St. Ignatius Chapel Memorial on McClellan Avenue is the only place on Fort Leavenworth identified with the namesake's first name.
- A husband and wife are namesakes for two Fort Leavenworth buildings: Cooke Hall on Pope Avenue is named for Philip St. George Cooke, and the Rachel H. Cooke Child Development Center is his wife.
- A mother and daughter serve as namesakes for two trails in the wooded northwestern part of post: Amy Sloan Trail and Lucia "Chick" Sloan Brown.
- Colonel Ezra B. Fuller and his daughter Lottie M. Fuller serve as namesakes for Fuller Hall on Augur Avenue and the Armed Forces Insurance Fuller Addition on Biddle Boulevard.
- The Fort Leavenworth School District (Kansas Unified School District #207) is the largest private organization on Fort Leavenworth. The district owns the buildings but leases the land from the Federal Government.
- Kansas Avenue and the Kansa Housing Area on post are named for the Kansas Indians. The name comes from the native people through the Spanish and French into English. Documented spelling and pronunciation since 1804: Kansas, Kansez, Kances, Kanzas, Kanza, Kaus, Kansee, Kanisse, Cannecis, Caws, and Kaws.

The Wayward Plaque Mystery

Eleven houses on post have plaques that list previous occupants of the quarters. In some cases the previous occupant plaques themselves can become touched with history. The large single family brick home sitting on a small hill at 401 Sherman Avenue was built in 1908 and welcomed its first occupant the next year. It has been the home for a few captains, but since 1923 the residents have been colonels. It has a previous occupant plaque smaller than others on post with thinner brass strips. The casual observer may ask, "Why do they stop in 1965?" The answer is on the back of the plaque. Written in felt tip pen is "the rest of the story." An anonymous correspondent describes how, in 2000, they found the plaque at an estate sale near Leavenworth, bought it, and returned it to the post housing office. It was put back up in the main hallway near the front door of 401 Sherman Avenue. It had been reported missing in the mid-1960s. It is unknown where it was for 35 years. The plaque could have been replaced by another newer plaque and the old plaque discarded. A resident could have taken it as a souvenir. Or someone unknown to the residents could have removed it and kept it as an artifact from the house. Whatever the facts, the plaque sits at 401 Sherman with several blank strips waiting for new occupant names.

- The decorative limestone block gate at the Grant Avenue entrance to Fort Leavenworth was erected in 1936 by the African American men of Civilian Conservation Corps Camp #4717C.
- Many of the older wood frame and brick buildings on Fort Leavenworth are painted yellow as protection against the elements. Old photographs indicate that this number formerly included Quarters #1, now in its native red brick. A Depression era Work Projects Administration book titled *A Guide to Leavenworth, Kansas*, found in the Kansas Room of the Leavenworth Public Library, states that Quarters #1 was yellow in 1940.
- Two Fort Leavenworth buildings are named for Army generals who died in the same aircraft accident. Andrews Hall, now the Frontier Army Museum and Lieutenant General Frank M. Andrews, and Barth Hall,² the headquarters of the Battle Command Training Center named in part for Brigadier General Charles H. Barth Jr. were both killed on 3 May 1943 in Iceland.
- The Boughton Memorial on Kearny Avenue is a private building constructed in 1921 by the Masonic Order under a proviso that it always provide space for the Fort Leavenworth U.S. Post Office.
- Major General Philip St. George Cooke (1809-95), the namesake for Cooke Hall on Pope Avenue served on Fort Leavenworth in four consecutive decades starting in the 1820s.
- Major General Philip St. George Cooke was born in Virginia but remained loyal to the Union during the Civil War. He and his wife Rachel (1810-after 1890) had four children. In addition to General Cooke's service in the war, their son and one son-in-law served as Confederate general officers, another son-in-law was a Confederate surgeon, while a third son-in-law fought in the Union Army. All survived except son-in-law J.E.B. Stuart. The scars of that separation ran deep. The family did not reunite until 1887, twenty-two years after the war.
- The Custer House, a VIP guest house on Pope Avenue, is named after Brevet Lieutenant Colonel Thomas W. Custer (1845-76), reputed to be the first soldiers to be awarded two Medals

² Barth Hall is named for a father and two sons, all Army general officers, with ties to Fort Leavenworth.

of Honor during the Civil War. He died with his brother George—who he addressed as Armstrong—at the battle of the Little Bighorn Valley in June 1876.

- Between the World Wars the United States Military Academy established several preparatory schools to ready selected enlisted men for the academic rigors of West Point. Post real estate records indicate that one existed in the 1940-41 school year on Fort Leavenworth in Davis Hall on Kearny Avenue
- Barth Hall on the corner of Kearney and McClellan Avenues, the headquarters of the Battle Command Training Program, is named after a father and his two sons who served as Army general officers: Brigadier General Charles H. Barth (1858-1926), Major General George B. Barth (1897-1969), and Brigadier General Charles H. Barth, Jr. (1903-43)
- Fort Leavenworth has had five brick post hospitals, the first three on McClellan Avenue not far from the Main Parade. The first was built where Barth Hall now stands, the second on the corner now occupied by Root Hall, and the third down the street in Dickenson Hall. The fourth was in Lowe Hall on Thomas Avenue and the newest, Munson Army Health Center, on Pope Avenue. The Dickenson, Lowe, and Munson buildings still exist.
- Colonel Ezra B. Fuller (1848-1925), the long-time secretary and librarian at the Command and General Staff School and its predecessors is the namesake for both a public and private building on Fort Leavenworth: Fuller Hall on Augur Avenue and the Fuller Addition to the Armed Forces Insurance building on Biddle Boulevard.
- Major General Frederick Funston, the namesake for Funston Hall on Sedgwick Avenue, commanded the 20th Kansas Volunteer Infantry Regiment in the Philippines in 1899-1900 as a colonel. Company C of the regiment was raised in Leavenworth County.
- The carved stone eagle over the sally port on the northern face of Grant Hall, completed in 1907, is the model for the eagle on the Command and General Staff College Crest. The Grant Hall eagle looks to the right while the eagle on the crest look left. The reason why is lost to history.
- At 159 feet, the Grant Hall clock tower is the tallest building on Fort Leavenworth.
- Greenleaf Hall in the Battle Command Training Center on Sherman Avenue is named for Major General Francis S. Greenleaf (1921-99), former chief of the National Guard Bureau. He was a lineman on the 1940 University of Nebraska football team that played in the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, California. He could not play in the game when his National Guard unit was called to active duty to prepare for World War II.
- Gruber Gym on Reynolds Avenue is named for Command and General Staff School commandant Brigadier General Edmund L. Gruber (1879-1941). Gruber is famous for writing the lyrics of the Field Artillery Song, now The Army Song, in 1908. His co-authors were his West Point classmates William L. Bryden and Robert M. Danford. Although Gruber always identified them as collaborators, they but they seldom get credit in popular stories about the song. Music was arranged by John Philip Sousa in 1917.

The Percival Lowe Tombstone Mystery

A visitor to the Fort Leavenworth National Cemetery will find two graves for Percival G. Lowe, side by side. The visitor may wonder why. The answer, of course, is that there are two Percival G. Lowes, father and son. The elder was quite accomplished as a soldier, wagon master and politician. However, the son also served. Percy, born in Leavenworth, Kansas, on 18 November 1863, was an 1883 civil engineering graduate of Pennsylvania Military College (now Widener University) in Chester, Pennsylvania. After working as a surveyor, he enlisted in Company B, 18th U.S. Infantry at Fort Hays, Kansas, in 1885 and served in the ranks as a private, corporal and sergeant until 1889. In March of that year he accepted a commission as a second lieutenant. He served with his regiment and as a surveyor and engineer in the west. He graduated from the Infantry and Cavalry School at Fort Leavenworth in 1894. Lowe was promoted to first lieutenant in the 4th Infantry in April, 1896. He transferred back to the 18th Infantry in 1897 and was a member of the Abercrombie Expedition, a geodetic survey of the Valdez Inlet and Copper River basin in Alaska in 1898. He served as the expedition topographer—and named a river for himself. He was promoted to captain in the 25th Infantry (an African American regiment) in June 1899, given command of Company L, and deployed with them to the Philippines in September. Captain Lowe was the commander of “Lowe’s Scouts,” a special reconnaissance unit. He remained with the regiment until it redeployed in 1902. Captain Lowe was several times mentioned in dispatches. He retired from the Army because of poor health and died in Colgate, Oklahoma on 10 May 1910.

- The Harrold Youth Center on Biddle Boulevard is named for Army brat and U.S. Air Force Captain Patrick K. Harrold (1944-69) who was shot down on a mission over Laos during the Vietnam War. His widow, Linda H. Harrold, worked as a social worker at Irvin Army Hospital at Fort Riley, Kansas, for twenty years.
- Fort Leavenworth was initially called Cantonment Leavenworth when established in 1827. The name was changed to Fort Leavenworth when War Department General Order #11, 8 February 1832, directed that all cantonments be henceforth designated as forts.
- The youngest namesake for a building and street on Fort Leavenworth is Virginia M. Hastings (1921-36) who died on post from an illness while a member of the first Girl Scout troop on Fort Leavenworth. Hasting House is the Girl Scout hut on Hastings Avenue.
- Frontier House, the Girl Scout building on Riverside Avenue is officially named Leigh Hall in honor of Captain Francis Leigh (1888-1939) the former post bandmaster. A World War I combat veteran, Leigh was the first bandmaster of the U.S. Army Band (Pershing’s Own) in Washington, D.C. Frontier House was completed in 1939 for use by the post Boy Scout troop.
- The home of the Command and General Staff College, the Lewis and Clark Center on Stimson Avenue, is named for Captain Meriwether Lewis (1774-1809) and Brigadier General William Clark (1770-1838), the leaders of the Army Corps of Discovery, 1804-06. Clark is traditionally identified as a captain, but he was actually a second lieutenant of “Artillerists” when the Lewis and Clark Expedition left St. Louis. His commission as a first lieutenant of Infantry was dated as he wintered with the corps near the Oregon coast in 1805-06. Lewis had promised Clark a captain’s commission when he was recruited for the expedition.